



# Litter Picks

Electronic Newsletter

May 2006

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Environmental Enhancement  
P.O. Box 10009, Richmond, Virginia 23240. (804) 698-4055 Fax (804) 698-4224.  
DEQ's Community Involvement Initiative: The Department of Environmental Quality is dedicated to helping the public better understand DEQ's role in protecting the environment, and to involving the public more effectively in environmental decision making.

*Welcome to Litter Picks, a look at litter prevention news in the Commonwealth and across the nation. We hope that some of this information is helpful to you in your programs, and hope you'll help us with news from your area related to litter prevention and awareness. Had a successful clean up event? Recognized companies or citizens for their clean up efforts? Let us know by sending this information to Sheila Barnett at*

[smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov)

## What Happened in Your Locality for Earth Day?

April 22, 2006 was Earth Day and there were many Earth Day events all over the Commonwealth. Events included education about the environment and the importance of recycling, shredding of important old documents, trash pick ups and beautifications. DEQ would like to prepare a comprehensive story about 2006 Earth Day events in Virginia. Please send us the following information to be included in the June edition of Litter Picks and Recycling Lines:

- ✓ Date of Event
- ✓ Activities/Displays
- ✓ Approximate number of people who attended
- ✓ Comments about the Earth Day Festival(s)
- ✓ Your name and contact information

Please email your information by June 1 to Sheila Barnett at

[smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:smbarnett@deq.virginia.gov)

## Civil Litigation for Littering? – It's Working in Wise County

Southwest Virginia is taking a leading role in litter abatement and prevention with its Assign-a-Highway program. Every mile of **Buchanan County** has been assigned to a probationer to clean. The roads in scenic southwest Virginia have never been more beautiful.

Bobby Justus, the state and regional Assign-a-Highway coordinator for the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable wants to talk to officials in every planning district in Virginia by September about the success of the program in order to encourage other locations to implement the program too.

Southwest Virginia officials want to promote their area of Virginia as a place for mountain music lovers, bluegrass, and a desirable place for business and industry locations, so they have adopted the slogan; "Company is a comin." Since litter detracts from the appeal of an area, other southwest Virginia officials are interested in following Wise County's lead in authorizing civil action to be taken against people who litter and dump trash.

Civil litigation has more teeth than a criminal littering charge. Criminal littering may bring with it a fine of \$100 – \$2,500 but such a case is harder to prove. Civil litigation is easier for the county to win and can generate more revenue for litter prevention and recycling programs.

See Assign-a-Highway Page 2

## Did You Know?

- ✓ The application to apply for litter and recycling grants MUST be postmarked by **June 30, 2006** in order to qualify for grant funds. The application must be signed by the County Administrator, City Manager, or the Town Manager. Go to: <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/recycle/forms.html> to download a copy of the application. The Performance and Accounting section MUST be postmarked by **August 31, 2006.**
- ✓ Bobby Justus is the Assign-a-Highway Program Coordinator. He can be contacted at: (276) 628-1600 or [bjustus@uppertnriver.org](mailto:bjustus@uppertnriver.org)
- ✓ Southwest Virginia localities and organizations held their 2nd Annual Litter Summit, "Talking Trash" on April 18. There were 80 attendees including Delegate Clarence E. "Bud" Phillips. The evening Judges' Dinner attracted six judges who discussed their continuing support of Assign-a-Highway and a new concept of an Environmental Court. On April 17<sup>th</sup> a workshop was held on how to use a GIS system to map littering hot spots and how to use groundhog cameras. Sixty people came to this all day workshop. Contact Carol Doss at the Upper Tennessee Roundtable at (276) 628-1600 or [upperTNriver@yahoo.com](mailto:upperTNriver@yahoo.com)
- ✓ **Page County** held a weeklong "Take Pride in Page County" clean up event from April 17 – 24. The scope of the litter clean up was anywhere in Page County. For groups that were looking for areas that needed a lot of help, Chris Anderson had a list of hot spots. (540) 743-4808 or [gypmoth@shentel.net](mailto:gypmoth@shentel.net)
- ✓ As part of Stewardship Virginia and in preparation for **Richmond** city's Earth Day event, volunteers from The Department of Environmental Quality, Conservation and Recreation, Richmond Department of Public Works, and Art Works Studios and Galleries picked up trash and planted flowers and shrubs along the flood wall and around the Manchester Canal. The Clean up and beautification project took place on April 5. Contact Julia Cole at (804) 698-4399 or [jhcole@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:jhcole@deq.virginia.gov)
- ✓ The EPA Region 2 and 3 held a Tire Pile Cleanup Forum on April 18 in Philadelphia. DEQ staff presented data and "lessons learned" concerning DEQ's Clean Sweep program and provided photographs on difficult cleanups at the Lee Farm site in Caroline County and the Holmgaard pile in Patrick County. Approximately 50 state and local officials and contractors attended the event. Contact Allan Lassiter at (804) 698-4215 or [arlassiter@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:arlassiter@deq.virginia.gov)

## Litter Picks Continued

### Environment Virginia Conference

Over 800 people attended the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Environment Virginia Conference that was held in Lexington at the Virginia Military Institute on April 18 – 20. The theme was “Linking Economic and Environmental Health: It’s Everybody’s Business.”

There were state and federal officials, environmentalists, and businesses represented at the conference.

There were three plenary sessions on Wednesday and Thursday, and nine environmental tracks. The attendees could either follow one track, or attend various workshops. The nine tracks included:

**The Chesapeake Bay** – The health of the Chesapeake Bay.

**Engaging the Public** – Holding an effective public hearing.

**Path to Energy Security** – The future of alternative fuel sources.

**Natural Capital** – An overview of the value of ecosystems.

**Development** – The environmental impact that needs to be considered before new buildings are built.

**Air Quality** – Implementing voluntary programs.

**Nutrient Reduction** – Point and non-point pollution reductions to help in the recovery of the Chesapeake Bay.

**Virginia Environmental Excellence Program Update and Discussion Forum** – DEQ’s pollution prevention and environmental management program.

**Managing Sustainable Growth with Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems.** – Wastewater disposal options.

Governor Tim Kaine arrived on Thursday and outlined his plans for Virginia’s environment. He said that we all share a strong common connection with the air, water and soil and that everyone loses when the environment is neglected. Governor Kaine encouraged attendees to be good stewards by supporting the preservation of natural areas of land, cleaning up Virginia’s waterways, finding alternative and cleaner burning fuel, and promoting waste-to-energy technologies.

To read the Governor’s speech, go to:

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/MediaRelations/Speeches/2006/EnviroSymposium.cfm>

### Cleaning up the City of **Richmond**

Building code inspectors for the city have been given a special new title. They are called Special Conservators of the Peace, or S-COPs. City inspectors wear badges that indicate their authority to write a summons for a violation on the spot without requiring police officers to be present. They are citing residents for eyesores ranging from inoperable vehicles on private property, unlawful accumulation of trash on public and private property, overgrown yards, and illegal dumping.

**Newport News, Hampton, Lynchburg and Virginia Beach** have also implemented this expedient technique in dealing with messy properties and illegal dumping. Approval must be obtained through the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

To learn more about the code enforcement go to:

<http://www.ci.richmond.va.us/showArticle.aspx?artID=A020E020C> or contact Gabriel Walker with Richmond City’s Property Maintenance Office at (804) 646-0620 or [walkerg@ci.richmond.va.us](mailto:walkerg@ci.richmond.va.us)

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### Assign-a-Highway Continued

The county can bring civil litigation against someone who illegally dumps trash because it discourages businesses from seriously considering locating in a trashy area.

In March, **Wise County’s** first two lawsuits were heard. The judge ordered one defendant to pay \$4,000 and the other to pay \$3,000 in restitution. The winnings from the civil litigation cases will go into the anti-littering campaigns.

Assign-a-Highway has been implemented in **Buchanan, Giles, Lee, Wise, Dickenson and Russell Counties. Henry County** expects to implement the Assign-a-Highway program. **Culpeper, Fauquier, Accomack and Northampton County** are also considering the program.

On May 10, Mr. Justus will be making an Assign-a-Highway program presentation in **Buckingham County** for PDC # 14. Seven Counties are expected to have representatives at the meeting. Other scheduled presentations are for PDC #12 in **Henry County** on May 11, PDC #3 in **Marion** on May 30th and PDC #4 in **Dublin** on May 30 and PDC # 15 in the **City of Richmond** on June 16.

To learn more about the Assign-a-Highway program, go to: <http://www.assignahighway.com/index.php> or contact Bobby Justus at 276-628-1600. To learn more about civil litigation, contact Greg Cross the litter warden for Wise County at 276-328-1000 or [cross\\_g@wisecounty.org](mailto:cross_g@wisecounty.org)

### Potomac Watershed Clean Up

As of May 3, 2006 the Alice Ferguson Foundation reported that over 6,000 volunteers participated in the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup. There were approximately 344 clean up sites in Maryland, Virginia and the District. Almost 200 tons of trash was collected.

Although the tonnage of what was picked up is impressive, the Alice Ferguson Foundation has an even more impressive goal – that of making the Potomac River and its tributaries trash free by 2013. The foundation plans to do a regional educational campaign to educate people about litter. They are also working on mapping out trash hot spots along the Potomac and its tributaries for clean up.

Go to: <http://www.hardbargainfarm.org/index1.php>

### 45,000<sup>th</sup> Patient was a Victim of Roadside Litter

The Wildlife Center of Virginia in Waynesboro has treated their 45,000<sup>th</sup> patient, an orphaned opossum who’s mother was struck by a car. Many of the animals that are cared for at the Wildlife Center are ones that are found alongside the road that have been attracted by roadside trash. A passing motorist stopped and picked up the approximately three month old babies and brought them to the wildlife center where they will be cared for and released back into the wild when they are ready.

The Wildlife Center brings animals that have been treated for injuries to schools as part of its “Care for Wildlife and the Environment” program. For more information about the Wildlife Center, go to: <http://www.wildlifecenter.org/>

### Chesterfield County to Host Environmental Fair

**Chesterfield County’s** Environmental Fair is being held on May 12 – 13 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Chesterfield County Fairgrounds. Exhibit themes will include alternative fuel vehicles, composting, horticulture and recycling. DEQ staff will be present and will use a Toyota Prius hybrid vehicle as a backdrop for their display on litter prevention and recycling.

For more information contact Pam Cooper at (804)751-2227 or [cooperp@chesterfield.gov](mailto:cooperp@chesterfield.gov)